



## Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) Framework INDICATORS TO BE MONITORED IN 2004

The park's VERP program safeguards the quality of both park resources and the visitor experience. Simply put, VERP in Yosemite serves as a report card to measure how well the park is protecting and enhancing the Merced River's Outstandingly Remarkable Values. The park recently adopted a set of indicators and standards (through the VERP framework) to quantitatively monitor and maintain environmental and social conditions in the Merced River corridor. These prescriptions—coupled with a monitoring program—will give park managers the information and rationale needed to make sound, science-based decisions about the impacts associated with visitor use.

Below is a list of the indicators being monitored in 2004. For a description of the zoning prescriptions and a map of where they are located in the river corridor, please consult the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan*.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>CAMPSITE NUMBER</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>1A Untrailed, 1B Trailed Travel</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b>	
Zone 1A	No net increase in number of active (non-recovering) campsites over the baseline identified in the Wilderness Impact Monitoring System (WIMS).
Zone 1B	No net increase in number of active (non-recovering) campsites over the baseline identified in the Wilderness Impact Monitoring System (WIMS).

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>CAMPSITE CONDITION</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>1A Untrailed, 1B Trailed Travel</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b>	
Zone 1A	95% of existing campsites are Class 1 or 2 (as identified in the Wilderness Impact Monitoring System), and no newly constructed sites exceed Class 2.
Zone 1B	95% of existing campsites are Class 1 or 2 (as identified in the Wilderness Impact Monitoring System), and no newly constructed sites exceed Class 3.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER PARTIES</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>1A Untrailed, 1B Trailed Travel</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b>	
Zone 1A	No more than one encounter with another party per day.
Zone 1B	No more than six encounters with another party per day.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>PEOPLE AT ONE TIME AT SELECTED SITES</b>
<b>ZONE:</b>	<b>1C Heavy Use Trail</b>
<b>STANDARD:</b>	Not more than 20 people on a 50-meter section of the trail, which equates to 66 square feet per person in this zone.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>EXPOSED TREE ROOTS</b>
<b>ZONE:</b>	<b>1D Designated Overnight</b>
<b>STANDARD:</b>	Not more than 4 trees, or moderate level of exposed roots in majority of trees, per target campsite.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SOCIAL TRAILS</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>2A Open Space, 2A+ Undeveloped Open Space</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b>	
Zone 2A	No net increase in number from 1990 baseline for linear features. No social trails for wetland features.
Zone 2A+	No net increase in number from 1990 baseline.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>LENGTH OF SOCIAL TRAILS IN MEADOWS</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>2B Discovery, 2C Day Use</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b>	
Zone 2B	No net increase in length from 1990 baseline.
Zone 2C	No net increase in length from 1990 baseline.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>RIVER BANK EROSION THAT IS ACCELERATED OR CAUSED BY VISITOR USE</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>2B Discovery, 2C Day Use</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b>	
Zone 2B	No net increase over baseline in linear extent of river bank erosion that is accelerated or caused by visitor use; no river bank erosion that exceeds Condition Class 2.
Zone 2C	No net increase over baseline in linear extent of river bank erosion that is accelerated or caused by visitor use; no river bank erosion that exceeds Condition Class 2.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>EXPOSED TREE ROOTS</b>
<b>ZONE:</b>	<b>3A Camping</b>
<b>STANDARD:</b>	95% of campsites meet the no, slight, or moderate root exposure criteria as defined by inventory and monitoring guidelines.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>WATER QUALITY</b>
<b>ZONE:</b>	<b>1D Designated Overnight, 2A Open Space, 2C Day Use, 2D Attraction, 3A Camping, 3B Visitor Base and Lodging, 3C Park Operations and Administration, but it is more practical to establish standards by segment than by zone.</b>
<b>STANDARD:</b>	Anti-degradation for each segment, for fecal coliform, nutrients (total nitrogen and total phosphorus), and hydrocarbons. Absolute minimum, all segments: State fecal coliform standard for recreational contact.

## For more information

- Consult the *User Capacity Program for the Merced Wild and Scenic River Corridor* for in depth information regarding the rationale for standards and examples of monitoring protocols.
- Read the VERP fact sheet (available on the park's planning web site at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning)).
- Attend one of the park's monthly open houses to learn more about VERP and speak with park staff about the latest monitoring activities. (A schedule of open houses can be viewed at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning).)